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[illegible] CORRESPONDENCE

OF

[illegible]TTE McMULLIN,

[illegible] WASHINGTON TERRITORY,

WITH

[illegible] SECRETARY OF WAR, AND OF THE NAVY,
[illegible] COMMUNICATION TO THE SPEAKER
[illegible] REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
[illegible] CONGRESS.

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1857

COPY

OF

LETTER TO MR. BUCHANAN.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON TERRITORY,
October 20th, 1857.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY, JAMES BUCHANAN,
President of the United States:

SIR:—I have the honor to inform you of my arrival at this place on the 9th, and of my entering upon the duties of executive of this Territory, on the 10th ultimo.

Immediately after my arrival, I availed myself of an opportunity to visit those portions of our territory bordering upon Puget Sound and Admiralty Inlet, as far north as the 49th parallel of North latitude, more particularly to acquaint myself with the relations existing between our people and the Indians, both native and foreign, and to inform myself with regard to the character of defense necessary to protect the settlers from the depredations of these children of the forest.

I visited all the important points within our Territory, bordering upon Puget Sound and the Straits of Fuca, and also Victoria, on Vancouver's Island, for the purpose of conferring with His Excellency GOVERNOR DOUGLAS, to the end that some mutual action might be taken, and some system of policy adopted to prevent any further incursions of the northern hordes of savages inhabiting the Russian possessions and British America. He informed me that he had neither the power nor means to punish those Indians for past offences committed within the territory of the United States, nor prevent similar incursions in the future; but that he would communicate the facts to the "Home Government," and no doubt that such representation, sustained by a request on the part of the government of the United States, would meet with early attention, and that one war steamer would be despatched to co-operate with a similar force on the part of the United States, in keeping those Indians within the limits of their own territory, and preserving peace among the tribes located upon the navigable waters of the two countries on this coast.

It is a source of sincere regret, that I am compelled to inform your Excellency, that this territory of Washington, containing a small and widely scattered population of about six or seven thousand souls, and lying upon our nothern frontiers, exposed to the incursions of the numerous and warlike tribes of the north, is in an almost wholly defenseless condition. It is true that a few regular troops are stationed at isolated localities, remote from each other, and generally in numbers not much more than sufficient for their own protection. Aside from the smallness of the force, these troops can render but little service in the protection of the people here, or in repelling invasion from without, owing to the character of the Indians to be dealt with and the peculiar character of the country.

The Northern Indians—a term which here includes all the aborigines residing north of the 49th parallel of latitude on this coast, and who are in the habit of visiting the interior waters of this territory—are an intelligent, bold and athletic race, perhaps more so than any other tribes upon the North American continent, and delight in war, rapine and murder.

Residing upon the various arms of the sea which project into the land, and upon those extensive channels which seperate Vancouver and other Islands from the main lands, they are bred to the sea, and are all very skillful navigators. They display much skill in naval architecture, and their war canoes, carrying from thirty to one hundred men each, and propelled through the water, against wind and tide, at from five to eight knots an hour, present an imposing appearance, and are really very formidable to the present widely scattered population of the territory.

These Indians are found almost constantly prowling around the Sound, moving from point to point in their canoes, with great secrecy and celerity—killing the settlers here and there, as they find opportunity, and plundering houses, killing and carrying off stock, and keeping the country in a state of continual alarm. The sense of insecurity felt by our citizens, particularly in the northern portions of the territory, has been greatly increased by the recent murder of Col. ISAAC N. EBY, late Collector of Customs for the Puget Sound District. A party of these northern savages attacked the Col.'s house, on Whidby's Island, about midnight, killed him, cut off his head and bore it off in triumph. While they were engaged in plundering the house, the Col.'s family, together with G. W. CORLIS, Esq., U. S. Marshal for the territory, and lady, who were guests of the family during the session of the United States District court, barely escaped through a back window, and passed the night in the woods.

Much alarm exists on the Island and through the surrounding country. Many of the people are collected in block houses for safety, while others have left, or are preparing to leave the territory altogether, and I fear that unless energetic measures are speedily adopted to keep these murderers and marauders beyond the limits of our territory, the northern portion of it, so rich in its arable lands, its timber, its coal fields and fisheries, will be abandoned altogether by our citizens.

The Indian tribes within our own territory, living west of the Cascade mountains, numbering some twelve thousand, are showing many signs of discontent, being unquestionably stimulated and encouraged to acts of outrage and violence by the tribes east of the mountains. They are located chiefly along the shores of the Sound and the Straits of Fuca, from which they obtain immense quantities of shell fish, and other marine articles of food, and by a general and simultaneous rising, could annihilate our settlements, with perhaps the exception of the more considerable villages, in a single night.

They complain that the government of the United States has been giving away, and is still selling their lands to settlers, without making them any sort of compensation; that they have, in good faith, made treaties with the Agent of the United States, whereby they were to receive a compensation for their lands, and that these treaties have not been carried out in good faith by our government.

They also say that the "Nesquallies"—at the head of the Sound—are being paid for their lands, and the treaty stipulations being carried out in that particular case, while they are put off with promises by the Indian Agents, with the sole purpose of keeping them quiet until the

white population becomes strong enough to drive them off entirely. They further say that their lands are being gradually taken up by the settlers, military and other roads cut through their country without their consent; their hunting grounds destroyed, and their ancient burial places desecrated.

They do not understand by what right these things are done, and upon what principles of justice the government refuses to ratify the treaties and pay them for the land, while it yet passes laws giving away and and selling their homes, their hunting grounds and their graves. Reasoning thus, they regard the settlers as trespassers upon their domain, and consequently view them with extreme jealously. This condition of things is daily growing worse, and the time may not be far distant when we may have a general Indian war, involving the tribes both east and west of the Cascades, with many of the powerful northern tribes as their allies.

I have before stated that the northern Indians are very skillful in nautical affairs. This is true, to a somewhat less extent, in relation to our own Indians who reside west of the Cascades, and on the borders of tide-water. Among these the whites have formed their principal settlements, and the waters of the Sound form the chief thoroughfares for both races. It will be readily perceived how formidable these Indians may become, who triple or quadruple the white population, should they unite with the more powerful northern tribes. Nearly all their journeys and expeditions are made in canoes; and the channels, straits and inlets which surround the numerous islands and ramify the whole country, afford them fine opportunities for their nautical operations, as well as excellent places of concealment.

The character of the country here is unique and peculiar. The prairies are generally small, and the country mostly covered with a dense growth of gigantic trees. Another forest, the growth of a former age, equally dense, and much more troublesome to the traveller, is found in most places lying upon the ground. These gigantic and partially decayed, prostrate trees, are covered with brush, vines and undergrowth of all kinds, which render it exceedingly difficult to traverse the country, while, at the same time, they form admirable lairs for wild beasts and lurking places for the wiliy savages. It will be seen from this, that regular troops can rarely operate to advantage, except as they are transported from place to place by water, there being but few roads passable for footmen, and a still less number for wagons and horses.

On the other hand, Puget Sound and Admiralty Inlet are the great thoroughfares of the central and northern portions of the territory, so regarded and used by both whites and Indians. This great body of inland tide-water is, perhaps the most remarkable of any in the world. It does

not lie in a compact form, but is distributed into channels, inlets, bays and harbors, and interspersed with islands, so much so, that although only about one hundred and fifty miles in length, it has some sixteen hundred miles of shore line, and is directly accessible to a country, on its borders, of not less than ten thousand square miles in extent. These waters are all deep enough for the largest ships, and generally so, to within a few yards of the shore, thus rendering navigation both safe and easy.

The northern Indian never comes to our borders except in his canoe. He travels in it through the Sound, and returns the same way. Our own Indians reside chiefly upon the shores of the Sound; make nearly all their journeys by water, and subsist chiefly upon the various kinds of fish with which these waters abound, and the fruits of the chase in the neighboring forests. A war steamer of moderate size and considerable speed, cruising in the vicinity of the 49th parallel, would be able to keep the northern maranders entirely beyond the limits of our territory; while a second vessel, of the same kind, cruising between that station and the head of the Sound, would keep our own Indians quiet, and render material aid to the Indian Department here.

After a careful investigation of the subject, by personal observation and otherwise, I am thoroughly convinced that the only practicable and efficacious method of protecting our citizens from the inroads of the northern Indians, and preventing a general war on the part of our own tribes, is to station vessels of war upon our waters, as above indicated. And I do most urgently request your excellency, in the name of the citizens of this territory, who have been encouraged to come here by the government, and who have risked their lives and property in this remote and isolated region of the confederacy, to consider these necessities of our people, and afford them such protection as is possible, consistently with the welfare of the nation at large.

Without a naval force, propelled by steam, upon the waters of Puget Sound, there is, in my judgment, no safety to the inhabitants.

It is impossible for land forces to operate to any advantage, for the reasons before indicated; and it would require a force sufficient to garrison every settler's house on the lower parts of the Sound, in order to render any efficient protection. So well satisfied am I of the truthfulness of these statements, and the correctness of the positions here taken, that I would rather have one small but active war-steamer, manned by a hundred men, upon these waters, than a thousand regular troops garrisoned along the shores.

It is also a matter of urgent necessity, that treaties should be ratified with those Indian tribes where the settlement of the whites have been

made within the limits of their territory. This course of policy, judiciously carried out, would remove the chief cause of complaint amongst our resident Indians, while, at the same time, it would be no more than an act of strict justice to them. The subject rises in importance, just in proportion to the encroachments of the whites upon thier territory, and the consequent danger of a general Indian war.

I would also respectfully suggest, as an additional means of bringing the Indians upon the Pacific coast into social relations with our government and people, that the plan as intimated to me by my friend, the Hon. JACOB THOMPSON, Secretary of the Interior, be carried out, to-wit: That one or more of the chiefs or headmen of each of the tribes in this territory be invited by the President to visit the national capitol, for the purpose of seeing and having a talk with the authorities, and that they be returned to their respective homes by the overland route, thereby exhibiting to them their utter inability to make war upon our government, and thus more effectually to awe them into peace and quietness.

In conclusion I beg leave to call your excellency's attention to the report of the citizens' meeting at Port Townsend, presided over by the Hon. F. A. CHENOWETH, U. S. District Judge, and attended by the U. S. District Attorney, and other numerous citizens; also, to the petition of the citizens of Whidby's Island, herewith enclosed.

I would also call your attention to the communication of Governor JAS. DOUGLASS, of Vancouver's Island, a copy of which is transmitted herewith.

I have the honor to be,

Your Excellency's ob't serv't.

(Signed) FAYETTE McMULLIN,

Gov. Washington Territory.

COPY

OF

LETTER TO HON. ISAAC TOUCY.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE,
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON TERRITORY,
November 19th, 1857.

HON. ISAAC TOUCY,
Secretary of the Navy:

SIR:—If you have not seen my official letter to the President, under date of October 20th, I beg leave to call your attention to it, and most respectfully urge the Department to place upon the waters of Puget Sound, two small and fleet war steamers, for the protection of our people against the incursions of the northern Indians.

I would suggest that one be assigned to duty, exclusively, in the northern portion of the Sound, and the other to be attached to the Qr. Master's Department, and subject to the orders of the military commandant of this District; with instructions to keep constantly cruising between the head of the Sound and Whidby's Island.

I do most especially urge that we be furnished with first class vessels as to speed, that they may successfully compete with the large and fleet war-canoes of the Northern Indians, which the "Massachusetts," the vessel formerly upon this station, was unable to do.

The various military posts upon the Sound can do but little more than defend themselves against these savages. They have no means by which to give pursuit to the Indians on the water, being powerless, therefore, to render any assistance to settlements even ten miles distant from their garrisons.

If we expect to retain in the Territory our present small population —not quite seven thousand souls, with 20,000 of our own Indians, to say nothing of the thousands of warlike savages to the north, surrounding them—then some means must be taken, and that speedily, to protect them from being murdered and their property destroyed.

I trust something will be done and at once, in relation to the defense I have indicated.

I am sir, respectfully,

Your most ob't serv't,

(Signed) FAYETTE McMULLIN,

Gov. Washington Territory.

COPY

OF

LETTER TO HON. JOHN B. FLOYD.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE,
OKYMPIA, WASHINGTON TERRITORY,
November 19th, 1857.

HON. JOHN B. FLOYD,

Secretary of War:

MY ESTEEMED FRIEND:—

You have not forgotten the conversation which took place at our last interview, relative to the necessary defense of this Territory.

I then gave it as my opinion, based upon reliable information which I had received, that it was absolutely necessary that one or two war steamers be placed upon the waters of Puget Sound, for the proper protection of the people against the hordes of savages occupying the British and Russian possessio ns to the north of us.

I am now perfectly satisfied, from personal observation, and from information received from the most reliable sources, that I was correct in the opinion I then expressed.

Now allow me, respectfully, but urgently, to request that you see and confer with the President and Secretary of the Navy, and take into consideration the matters set forth in my official communication to the President, of the 20th ultimo, wherein I gave my views and suggestions, and presented the measures of precaution and preperation which the present condition of affairs demand, to-wit: The placing of two small but fleet war steamers upon these waters, as of the greatest importance to the retention of our small population; and I would respectfully suggest, that while one be subject to the Navy Department, with instructions to cruise almost entirely in the northern portion of the Sound, the other be attached to the Qr. Master's service here, and subject to the orders of the military commandant of the Puget Sound District, with general instructions, however, from the Secretary of the Navy, to keep constantly cruising between the head of the Sound and Whidby's Island.

I make the suggestion that the one attached to the Quarter Master's Department be subject to the orders of the commandant of this District, rather than the commanding General of the Pacific Division, for the reason that the head quarters of the latter officer is too remote to give orders where necessity requires prompt action for the preservation of the lives and property of our citizens.

If any apology is necessary for having seemed to trespass upon the Department, it is to be found in the alarmed state of the public mind here, and the deep solicitude I feel for the protection of our people.

I do not desire any accession of the military force here, but would give it as my opinion that two or three companies of mounted troops might, with advantage, take the place of the same number of infrantry forces, which latter are mainly servicable here in garrisoning posts, but powerless for good in pursuit of bands of mounted Indians.

In conclusion, I do most respectfully and urgently request the consideration and adoption of my suggestions, as far as may be compatible with the views and interests of the government.

I am sir, respectfully,

Your most ob't serv't,

(Signed) F. McMULLIN,

Gov. Washington Territory.

COPY

OF

LETTER TO THE HON. SPEAKER

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE,
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON TERRITORY,
November 24th, 1857.

TO THE HON. SPEAKER
United States House Representatives:

SIR:—I would respectfully call your attention, and through you, the attention of the House to the fact, that the present per diem allowance of $3 to members of the Legislative Assembly of this Territory, is insufficient to pay the actual expenses incurred by those from remote counties, some of whom have to travel 200 miles to reach the Capitol.

Traveling is very expensive, as well as their subsistence here, during the session.

I would therefore, respectfully recommend to Congress a reasonable increase of the pay of the members of our Legislature.

I am sir, respectfully.

Your ob't serv't,

(Signed) F. McMULLIN,
Governor Washington Territory.